Miscellanea.

THE SOCIETY OF ARTS AND SCHOOL OF DESIGN AT BIRMINGHAM.—The annual meeting of this twofold institution was held on Monday last in the rotunda of the establishment,—the Hon. F. Gough in the chair,—supported by the mayor, high bailiff, Mr. Wilson, inspector of the Government School of Design, &c. The attendance was very numerous, and the walls of the room were decorated with the drawings and models of the pupils, and shewed, it was thought, a very marked improvement. The mayor regretted that neither he nor the manufacturers of the town in general had hitherto afforded the institution that support to which it was entitled, especially from the manufacturers, the taste and skill of whose workmen, and the sale of whose goods, might be so much improved by its means. The exhibition then before them, however, would, he trust, greatly stimulate their further exertions as it would his own. Various other speakers addressed the meeting on the merits of such institutions, and a distribution of prizes took place, during which Mr. Wilson adverted to the most meritorious specimens exhibited, and said that all of them were equal, and several of them superior, to any of those produced in the Schools of Design throughout the kingdom. The Bishop of Manchester was voted president by acclamation. The treasurer stated the income for the past year had only been 275*l.*, whereas it was necessary to use every exertion to increase it to 500*l.* The chairman finally addressed the meeting on the advantages of the institution, and expressed his astonishment that the Birmingham masters were only now beginning to appreciate these advantages, knowing, as they must, that their power of competing with their neighbours depended on correctness and elegance of design. Foreigners might gain advantages in some manufactures from climate, but the varied trades of Birmingham had nothing to do with that ingredient, and to taste in form and design they must look solely for their superiority. He trusted that the inhabitants would consider the importance of the establishment, and relieve it from the debt which now pressed upon it.

ELECTRO-TELEGRAPHIC.—There have been more than one claim to, and account of, the origin of this miracle of an age of miracles, as every habitual reader of THE BUILDER must be well aware. Here is a French version of it, or rather an Englishman's account of its French original, from the "London Anecdotes:"—"Upwards of sixty years ago (in 1787-9) when Arthur Young was travelling in France, he met with a Monsieur Lemond, 'a very ingenious and inventing mechanic,' who had made a remarkable discovery in electricity. 'You write two or three words on a piece of paper,' says Young; 'he takes it with him into a room, and turns a machine inclosed in a cylindrical case, at the top of which is an electrometer, a small fine pith ball. A wire connects with a similar cylinder and electrometer in a distant apartment, and his wife, by remarking the corresponding motions of the ball, writes down the words they indicate, from which it appears he has formed an alphabet of motions. As the length of the wire makes no difference in the effect, a correspondence might be carried on at any distance. Whatever the use may be, the invention is beautiful."

SWANSEA PATENT FUEL WORKS, under Warlich's patent, have shipped their first cargo of the contract with Government for 30,000 tons. The works cover between three and four acres of ground, and contain eight presses worked by steam, each press having twelve revolving moulds. There are also thirty double retorts, each holding one ton of fuel. Two iron tanks contain 500,000 gallons. The machinery is ranged under an iron roof, now 300 feet by 47, to be extended 60 or 70 feet. When in full operation 2,000 tons per week will be manufactured.

PROPOSED NEW RECORD OFFICE.—We learn from a reply to Mr. Milnes in the House of Commons the other night, that no determination has yet been come to as to the erection of the proposed new Record office on part of the Rolls' estate, concerning which we gave particulars some time since.

TESTIMONIAL TO MR. CUBITT.—We informed our readers, some time since, of the intention of the Builders' Society to present to Mr. Thos. Cubitt his portrait, in testimony of their high esteem and respect for his character. For some time the choice of an artist, to execute the commission, has wavered between Mr. Pickersgill, R.A., and Mr. J. P. Knight, R.A., both good men and true. On Monday last, however, it was decided in favour of the senior, and Mr. Pickersgill will forthwith commence the painting. It will afterwards be engraved, and a copy presented to each subscriber. We have but one fault to find with the arrangement, and that is, that participation in the testimonial appears to be confined to members of the craft.

LAMP-LIGHTING BY ELECTRICITY.—Doubts have been suggested as to the possibility of extinguishing the lights once struck, unless by turning off the gas either generally and inconveniently, or particularly and by the usual lamp-lighters, whose services and expenses, therefore, would still be required. But, though in originally throwing out the idea, we had no design to propose any one practical invention, we may just remark on this suggestion that as a magnet can be readily made to rotate by the electric power, we can see no difficulty in turning the gas either on *or off* by such means, one semi-rotation turning it on, to be lit, and the next semi-rotation turning it off again. In this way, too, the lamps of any one district, or any series of alternate lamps, or, in fact, any particular congeries of them, might be separately organised from head-quarters, and *managed* with the utmost facility. A series of rapid rotations of the magnet, we may add, might be made to operate in connection with proper apparatus attached so as to clean the surfaces of properly formed lamp-glasses simultaneously, and thus probably remove the last and only remaining objection, or shadow of an objection, to the practical and economical working of the original idea.

CHELMSFORD POLYTECHNIC EXHIBITION.—A very interesting exhibition of works of art, models of scientific inventions, natural curiosities, &c., has been opened at the Chelmsford Shire Hall, by the Mechanics' Institution, for the gratification and instruction of the town. The catalogue extends to forty-two quarto pages, and includes no less than 1,500 different articles. Great credit is due to the members of the society for the energy and skill with which they have carried out the idea, and to the neighbouring gentry for the liberal manner in which they placed their collections at the service of the committee. Great good is done by such exhibitions: we hope, before it closes, that it will be made accessible for a time to those who may be unable to *pay* for the enjoyment.

LITTLE DUNMOW CHURCH, ESSEX.—Sir: Chancing to be at Dunmow, in Essex, for the first time a few days ago, curiosity led me to visit Little Dunmow, famous for the custom introduced in the reign of Henry III., by Robert de Fitzwalter, in reference to the "Flitch of Bacon." The present church consists of the south aisle only, of an ancient church; though much decayed, the beautiful outlines of the windows which remain are well worthy of being illustrated in THE BUILDER, but the principal object of this communication is to call your attention to the extraordinary fact, that the tomb and statue of the above-named Robert de Fitzwalter, with that of his lady, which, through a long series of years, stood in the chancel of the present church, have lately been removed, and the reading-desk, which stood in the middle of the church, has been placed in their stead. The statues, as well as some portions of the tomb, have been *placed unprotected on the floor*, inside the door, at the entrance to the church. A portion of one of the statues, which has been broken, has been put underneath the staircase, as well as parts of the tomb. Probably such proceedings may have been adopted through inadvertence, or without premeditation, but whatever the cause, pray inquire into the matter, and call for the restoration of the tomb and statues of those whose memories have been hallowed by the kindly recollections of ages.—I am, &c., R. B.

Surbiton-hill, Surrey, May 30, 1848.

PUBLIC BATHS AND WASHHOUSES.—Last week a dinner was given at the London Tavern in aid of the model establishment of baths and washhouses in Goulston-square, when subscriptions were announced by the secretary to the amount of 4,400*l.*, which, with loans effected, and which it is calculated the profits of the establishment at Goulston-square will repay, make up a sum of 7,450*l.* The total amount required to pay off the debt of the undertaking is 10,500*l.*, so that its supporters still require to make up the sum of 3,000*l.* Great exertions have been made by many members of the committee; to Mr. John Bullar, the honorary secretary, in particular, the public are much indebted; nevertheless we are compelled to think as we have on more than one occasion said, that there has been inefficiency somewhere,—both time and money have been sadly wasted. At the dinner, Lord Ashley, the Rev. Sydney Godolphin Osborne, Mr. Chadwick, and others, ably advocated the sanitary movement.——We are glad to hear, and will mention it, as a good example, that the East London Waterworks Company and the British Gaslight Company have generously afforded gratuitous supplies of water and gas to the model establishment.——The committee of the baths and washhouses in George-street, Euston-square, have issued a further appeal to the public for aid.

CATLIN'S INDIAN COLLECTION.—Mr. Catlin has opened, for a short time, his very curious North American Indian collection in Waterloo-place, and has added to it an interesting model, made by himself from personal observation, of the Niagara falls. The American papers, by the way, describe these falls as being, at the time of writing, quite without water,—a mere milldam, to witness which hundreds of people have been collected. All the mills fed by the river were stopped, and two men had driven partly across in a gig. The generally received conjecture is, that Lake Erie must be making a grand delivery of ice, and that the mouth of the Niagara, although large, is not quite enough to take in the whole at once, and that the consequence is back water.

THE NELSON COLUMN.—Mr. Woodington has completed his model for one of the compartments of the base of the Nelson column in Trafalgar-square. The incident the artist has chosen for representation is one that occurred at the battle of the Nile, where Nelson, being wounded in the forehead by a musket ball and carried down into the cock-pit, declined the immediate care of the surgeon, directing that officer to attend to the rest of the wounded, and to take him in his turn.

THE EUSTON-SQUARE PASSENGER STATION.—Enormous works are going on here. *Both* ends of the large passenger-hall have been rebuilt (as we said should be the case), as well that which remained sound as that to which the accident occurred. Each brick column now contains a strong iron core. The general meeting room, adjoining the hall, and of which there is a drawing in the Academy exhibition, is nearly finished. Of covered-ways, with light iron roofing, there would seem to be some acres.

CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.—On the 29th ult., the anniversary meeting of this society was held, when the report of the council was read, and officers elected for the ensuing year. A paper was read by C. W. Goodwin, M.A., on an Anglo-Saxon legend, and Mr. Franks drew attention to a fine pavement of encaustic tiles, of which a representation was in the rooms.

STRENGTH OF CURVED BEAMS.—Sir: If any of your correspondents will give me the following information, I shall feel extremely obliged. The formula for the strength of beams subjected to transverse pressure when they are curved between the bearings in form of an arch; or the difference in strength between beams of this kind and straight beams, the formula for which is, $\frac{d^2 b}{l}$ when d = depth. b = breadth, and l = length of bearing. Or, again, how am I to calculate the length of bearing in arched girders which have not a straight tie? I shall also be glad to have a formula for the deflection, in the case of a beam being curved in this manner.—J. T.

Yarmouth, June 3rd, 1848.